



MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Chief Administrative Officer

At its meeting held July 8, 2003, the Board took the following action:

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Captain Anthony Argott, Sheriff's Department, Councilwoman Nancy Ramos, City of Commerce and Fire Chief P. Michael Freeman, presented a verbal report as detailed in the attached report dated July 7, 2003, regarding the impact of the Union Pacific train derailment in the City of Commerce on June 20, 2003, including an explanation of when railroad agencies need to notify local jurisdictions, and recommendation on how to manage similar situations in the future.

Supervisor Molina made the following statement:

"The recent railroad accident in the City of Commerce revealed that local emergency responders did not receive timely notification of the potential for a disaster. Currently, there are over 50 residents who have been displaced from their homes. The overall dollar cost of this incident is still being assessed. There are also a number of issues (such as covering the transition from emergency sheltering to temporary housing, and the total costs of the incident) that remain unclear. The County of Los Angeles responded by directing the Departments of Mental Health and Public Social Services' staff to address the needs of those impacted. The County's expenditures associated with this incident must be reimbursed by Union Pacific Railroad.

"Railroads are legally required to notify the State whenever there is the potential for life or property safety incident caused by the freight train. As a preliminary step to ensure more rapid notification of local authorities, the Union Pacific Railroad was given the contact phone numbers to the Sheriff's Communication Center and the County Fire Dispatch Center. Union Pacific was advised that the Sheriff's Communication Center will be the primary contact for all of Los Angeles County, and who in turn will notify the appropriate agencies for immediate response."

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After discussion, on motion of Supervisor Molina, seconded by Supervisor Yaroslavsky, unanimously carried, the Board took the following actions:

1. Requested the Sheriff's Department's Emergency Operations Bureau to provide monthly updates on the establishment of a proposed notification protocol for the County of Los Angeles in a local emergency such as a potential train disaster, and on other issues related to the Union Pacific train derailment in the City of Commerce on June 20, 2003, such as reimbursement costs associated with it; and
2. Instructed the Chief Administrative Officer to seek Federal legislation to adopt revised notification protocols, if applicable, to avoid such incidents in the future.

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Attachment

Copies distributed:

Each Supervisor
County Counsel
Fire Chief

Letter sent to:

Sheriff